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ABSTRACT

Research reported here focuses on the effects of community status upon citizen participation and conflict in school politics. One objective was to test Minar's studies which showed higher levels of participation in lower status districts due to the differential possession by higher and lower status school districts of resources of conflict management skills in their respective populaces. A second objective was to investigate factors which operate to minimize and/or contribute to conflict. A sample of eight districts were selected. The theoretical framework drew upon Minar's work, employed Easton's model of the political processes, and investigated Gamson's study of the structural effects upon the incidence and intensity of conflict. Key findings show that: 1) the overall conflict ranking proved to be highly correlated with the referendum dissent ranking; 2) the rankings on the structural variables proved to be unreliable predictors of overall conflict; 3) leadership by the school authorities and political culture of the blue and white collar districts accounted for most of the variation in conflict levels. The present study shows that low conflict, and vice versa, is due both to differences in cultural ethos and to the level of management resources. An obvious implication of the findings is that school authorities might find training designed to raise their "political consciousness" useful. (Author/SJM)

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COMMUNITY STATUS AND CONFLICT IN SUBURBAN SCHOOL POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION

Theory and research differ as to the relationships between community social status, rates of citizen political participation, and the incidence and intensity of conflict in community decision-making. While mass society theorists predict that the greatest potential for alienation, conflict, and extremism is to be found in lower status urbanized areas where people participate least, are most "isolated" and least attached to the fabric of society, other theorists cite some research indicating that higher status communities have a higher incidence of conflict than do lower status ones and suggest that this is due to the higher levels of participation characteristic of higher status populaces. However, some notable findings in the field of school politics, which conform to neither of the above theories, are those of Minar, who, in a study of voting behavior in forty-eight Chicago suburban elementary school districts,[1] found that higher status districts had both lower levels of electoral participation and of electoral dissent (used here as a measure of conflict) in school board elections than did lower status districts. The intriguing contradictions in theory and research outlined above, and the implication that educational decision-making may constitute a special case unto itself, prompted the research reported on here,[2] which used Minar's pioneering work as a point of departure for a comparative case study focusing upon the effects of community status upon citizen participation and conflict in suburban educational decision-making.

BACKGROUND

The differential rate and type of political participation of persons according to social status has been seen to have a number of far reaching political consequences. Research has repeatedly shown that higher status persons vote more, participate more in organizations, and, of course, are better educated than lower status persons.[3] Mass society theorists have viewed with concern the lower participation of lower status persons which they see as symptomatic of the structural effects which cause lower status persons, especially in urbanized areas, to feel isolated and to be weakly "attached" to the fabric of society.[4] These theorists fear the vulnerability of the "unattached" masses to propaganda and demagoguery and value the mediating effects of membership in independent organizations as an essential condition for democracy. Accordingly, they hold that the greatest potential for alienation, conflict, and extremism in the modern world is to be found in lower status urbanized areas. Here, in comparing lower and higher status communities, it seems important to distinguish between the frequency of conflict and the nature and intensity of conflict. Coleman's well known analysis of community conflict argues that those who are more attached to the community, through membership in community organizations for example, are more likely to abide by democratic practices and are less likely to engage in rancorous conflicts though they are likely to be drawn into controversies sooner and more frequently than those less attached.[5]

A body of literature has grown up which conerns itself with those identified as unattached, "powerless" or alienated citizens, persons who theoretically express their discontent from time to time by negative voting.[6] Studies of this type have purported to demonstrate that these

citizens are concentrated in the lower strata and that "political negativism (voting "down" the issue) cannot be reduced to a simple theory of economic self-interest."[7] Advocates of the theory of political negativism also argue that the participation of ordinarily passive but alienated citizens in elections helps "explain" the fact that research has shown that high turnout in tax and bond referenda is associated with defeat.[8] However, this body of literature has been somewhat skeptically reviewed by Banfield and Wilson, who focus upon the difficulties of operationally defining alienation or related concepts,[9] and a quite extensive and still more skeptical critique of this literature has been presented by Crain, Katz, and Rosenthal, who make a case for the rationality of "negative" voting.[10]

The importance of community and sub-community attitudes towards politics and political participation, as they vary according to social status, has been stressed by Banfield and Wilson, who have propounded a much discussed thesis revolving around what they characterize in city politics as the "fundamental cleavage between the public-regarding, Anglo-Saxon Protestant, middle-class ethos and the private-regarding, lower-class, immigrant ethos."[11] The public-regarding political culture emphasizes reform, "good government," and the disinterested support of the broad public interest while the private-regarding culture, which is associated with "machine" politics and is little concerned about "good government," instead seeks personal benefits and favors from the political system and identifies with the ward or neighborhood rather than the community as a whole.[12] While the private-regarding culture recognizes the legitimacy of competition and conflict between groups concerned with narrow and special interests, the public-regarding culture takes "the view that politics, rather than being a struggle among partial and private interests is (or

at any rate ought to be) a disinterested effort to discover what is best for the community 'as a whole'."[13]

Banfield and Wilson argue that the effects of the reform movement, which has been the ideal of the middle-class ethos, have not been an unmixed blessing. In this connection, they cite some limited evidence which, paradoxically, suggests that the more middle-class a city is the less likely it will carry out what are ordinarily considered progressive endeavors.[14] Here, as an explanation, they propose that:

> ...the political and governmental arrangements to which the middle-class ideal gives rise tend to emphasize procedural matters (honesty, efficiency, and impartiality) at the expense of substantive ones, and are in fact often incapable of assembling the amounts of influence necessary to carry out a large undertaking.[15]

Some national survey data which support the tentative hypothesis given above have been presented by Crain and Rosenthal.[16] Their data show that communities in which middle-class residents predominate are the ones which have the most difficulty acting positively upon such matters as urban renewal, school desegregation, and flouridation referenda. Interestingly, though they incorporate into their theoretical argument Banfield and Wilson's thesis regarding the significance and effects of the public-regarding style as a type of participation, they focus upon the link between social status and rate of participation in their explanation of their findings:

> We hypothesize that the higher the socioeconomic status of the population of a community, the greater the level of citizen participation in day-to-day community decision-making. The main effect of this seems to be to increase the power of the citizens vis-a-vis the local government and the elite; in turn, this leads to high levels of controversy, decentralization of decision-making power, and a tendency toward immobility on the part of the government. The relationship is curvilinear at the extreme upper end of the distribution; very high-status cities demonstrate a more tightly organized and more potent decision-making structure, similar to low-status cities.[17]

Other theorists have also supported the view that higher levels of participation may lead to higher levels of conflict, but without relating this proposition to community status. Gamson argues that a participative political structure, one that permits or encourages widespread participation, increases the structural conduciveness to community conflict.[18] Gusfield, in discussing the relationships between mass and pluralistic theories of society, propounds that both high levels of participation and the strong independent local and intermediate organizations of a pluralistic society may lead to high levels of political conflict and to extremism.[19]

As Crain and Rosenthal recognized in their article, David Minar's findings, in the study of school district voting behavior mentioned at the outset, constitute a notable exception to their findings. While both studies concluded that increased citizen participation in decision-making was associated with conflict, they differed as to the social status of the communities typically experiencing such higher levels of participation and conflict. Crain and Rosenthal observed that, of the suburban school systems Minar studied, "it may be that many of them are in the upper end of the educational distribution where the 'reversal' might be in effect."[20] Still, they noted that, of their own data, the set which did not fit their theory concerned school bond referenda. Hence, they concluded that some educational decisions may not follow the pattern of behavior they described.[21] Moreover, as stated earlier in this paper, since Minar's data showed higher levels of participation in lower status districts they deviated not only from the predictions of Crain and Rosenthal and the "pluralistic" theorists but also from those of the mass society theorists.

In his analysis, Minar concluded that the variable which could best account for his findings was the differential possession by higher and lower status school districts of resources of conflict management skills in their respective populaces. By conflict management resources, Minar meant the aggregate organizational and management skills and associated attitudes derived from the level of education and the kinds of occupations of a given populace. Minar hypothesized that the greater possession of conflict management resources by higher than by lower status districts promoted deference to expertise (i.e., deference to professional administrators) in the former districts and enabled them to control and channel the educational decision-making process (especially by means of the use of caucuses for the selection of school board candidates) in such a way as to minimize conflict. In a follow-up comparative case study of four of the original forty-eight districts,[22] Minar explored the validity of his hypothesis and concluded that it was essentially correct. However, because Minar chose to select for in-depth study two high status-low conflict districts and two low status-high conflict districts, there was no common effect between the pairs of districts. Thus, by not also including what according to the "conflict management resources" hypothesis would be the "deviant" cases (i.e., high status-high conflict districts and low status-low conflict districts), the design of the study tended to make the rejection of the hypothesis unlikely.

Minar, of course, has not claimed that his hypothesis could account for all phenomena of school politics, but instead argues for its general applicability. As he notes, "such questions as what happens to low-conflict communities in the event of a deep ideological schism or what happens to a high-conflict community in the presence of extraordinarily

skilled technical leadership remain substantially untouched."[23] Thus, one of the objectives of the present study, concomitant with a further effort to test Minar's hypothesis, was to investigate, through a design which included "deviant" as well as "non-deviant" cases, the factors operating in the absence of plentiful management resources to minimize conflict in low status-low conflict districts, and the factors appearing to account for the ineffectiveness of the abundant management resources in high status-high conflict districts.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In order to study the effects of community social status upon citizen participation and the incidence and intensity of conflict in educational decision-making, a sample of eight districts[24] were selected from the 118 Cook County suburban elementary school districts to provide pairs of districts to fill the cells of a fourfold typology[25] (see Figure 1) of community status (as measured by 1960 median family income) and known conflict (as indicated by performance in tax and bond referenda from 1963 through 1968).[26] It was assumed that districts which had defeated two or more referenda from 1963 through 1968 would tend to be districts high in conflict in general, while districts which had held referenda during this period without defeat would tend to be districts low on overall conflict.[27] Happily, this assumption was born out by the case study data collected.

Specifically, the selection procedure was as follows: All 118 districts were ranked from highest to lowest on 1960 median family income, and referenda results were noted for the 35 highest (from $9,200 to $23,065 median family income) and the 45 lowest districts (from $5,130 to $7,999 median family income). Two pairs of districts were selected from the 31 highest and two pairs from the 30 lowest districts.[28] The criterion

Conflict in Referenda

Community Status	Conflict: Low	Conflict: High
High	Northview (1) Oakton (4) TYPE I	Greenwood (2) Camden (3) TYPE IV
Low	Smithville (6) Trenton (8) TYPE II	Alton (5) Weston (7) TYPE III

Figure 1: DISTRICTS SELECTED CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY STATUS (RANKED BY NUMBER) AND CONFLICT IN REFERENDA

of conflict chosen seemed reasonably selective since the data showed that only 7 of the 35 highest and 13 of the 45 lowest qualified according to it as high conflict districts. Data reflecting the socioeconomic status of the eight districts is presented in Table 1.

The theoretical framework which guided the collection and analysis of data drew upon Minar's work and employed Easton's model of the political system to identify major political processes such as demands upon the authorities and associated supports which, as inputs, evoke from the authorities decisional outputs.[29] In addition, the framework included an effort to take account of the extent to which certain structural features of the school districts' communities, which on the basis of theory and research might be expected to promote or inhibit the incidence and intensity of community conflict, were correlated with the levels of conflict the respective districts experienced.

Three interrelated structural categories suggested by Gamson were investigated.[30] Structural strain, which refers to tensions arising from change in the community which may lead to conflict, was measured by the magnitude of variation in school district average daily attendance (A.D.A.) and assessed valuation over the decade from 1959 to 1969.[31] Structural conduciveness to conflict, which refers to structural features which could provide potential lines of cleavage in the community, was measured by the extent to which the school districts possessed distinct solidary groups (such as religious or ethnic groups). Following Gamson's method, groups within the districts were classified as distinct solidary groups if over half of the respondents interviewed mentioned them and attributed to them some common outlook. Districts were ranked on the number and degree of solidarity of solidary groups, the latter dimension being determined

Table 1

SELECTED DATA REFLECTING THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF EIGHT SCHOOL DISTRICTS [a]

	Northview	Greenwood	Camden	Oakton	Alton	Smithville	Weston	Trenton
EDUCATION: Proportion of the total population 25 and over who are:								
Elementary Educated:	11	20	16	19	35	37	34	49
High School Educated:	28	34	45	53	53	49	58	40
College Educated:	61	46	38	28	11	14	8	6
INCOME: Proportion of all families with 1959 annual income levels:								
Less than $7,000:	15	22	19	23	41	44	43	51
$7,000 to $9,999:	8	16	24	35	34	31	37	29
$10,000 or more:	77	62	57	41	24	26	20	20
EMPLOYMENT: Proportion of total employed persons in the following job classifications:								
Craftsman, Operatives, or Laborers:	6	15	18	32	48	42	59	59
Professional-Managerial:	49	40	43	28	14	18	10	9

[a] Source: U.S. Census, 1960, Tables P-1 and P-3.

according to four criteria suggested by Gamson.[32] Structural integration, which refers to the extent to which the districts possessed networks of interlocking and cross-cutting ties, both formal (organizational) and informal, which might tend to bind together inhabitants and constrain and inhibit their behavior in issues and affairs of community concern, was measured indirectly, insofar as possible, by gathering data on the number of local organizations, the extent of their activity and the level of citizen participation within them, and the extent to which they were district-wide and broadly representative in their membership. According to Gamson's theory, the three categories of structural determinants--strain, conduciveness, and integration--are highly interrelated and operate only in conjunction to predict the likelihood and level of community conflict. Thus, "high conduciveness will not produce rancorous conflict if unaccompanied by strain nor if, although accompanied by strain, structural integration is great."[33]

The methodology employed for the measurement of variables for which the data were wholly or partly qualitative was modeled after the procedures followed by Crain and his associates in an analagous research problem--their comparative analysis of the school desegregation issue in eight northern cities.[34] They elected to develop rank orderings of the eight cities on variables, such as total civil rights activity, for which they could not produce "hard" numerical data to demonstrate the accuracy of their rankings, instead endeavoring to justify their rankings by thoroughly describing the basis for them. Additionally, they presented sufficient case study data to allow readers to make their own rankings, if they wished, as a validity check. As Crain recognized, this method in some cases necessitates comparing "apples and oranges." Nevertheless, recognizing the

methodological problems involved, the method was utilized because it seemed the best one available to deal with the research problem .

Following, Minar, conflict was defined as the "public confrontation of competing demands"[35] and included all such demands pertaining to school affairs publicly manifested, for example, in public meetings, in the newspapers, by picketing, and in elections. The dependent variable, conflict in educational decision-making, was measured by developing rankings (on the basis of analyses of case study data, including voting behavior in school board elections and tax and bond referenda) of the districts studied on the incidence and on the intensity of the conflict they experienced during the five year period, 1964-1969, for which data were collected. From these two rankings, an average or overall conflict ranking was established.

Data on participation and conflict in each district were collected by means of interviews with the principal participants (i.e., school board members, superintendents, and citizens active in school affairs) and by means of a review of the minutes of school board meetings and newspaper coverage (where applicable) for the five year period studied. An interview schedule was developed with sets of questions designed to elicit data on the key variables determined by the theoretical framework. One area of emphasis in the interviews was the pursuit of detailed descriptions of behavior during the principal issues and controversies each district had experienced.

FINDINGS

Structural Effects and Conflict

Since space limitations ~~have~~ here prohibit the presentation of an adequate summary of the case study data supporting the ranking of the districts on overall conflict, and since, in any case, most of what follows

does not depend upon the validity of this ranking, we will simply begin by presenting an important part of the evidence, the cumulative voting data of the eight districts (see Table 2). As can be seen in Table 2, the overall conflict ranking proved to be highly correlated with the referendum dissent ranking and, furthermore, perhaps by chance presents the districts in a systematic order according to their selection types.

Turning briefly to the question of structural effects upon the incidence and intensity of conflict, as shown in Table 3, the rankings on the structural variables selected as indicators of structural strain, conduciveness, and integration proved to be unreliable predictors of overall conflict. For example, while Northview's conflict ranking matches our expectations based on Gamson's theory, Smithville should rank higher on conflict and Alton, given its low level of growth, should rank lower. In the case of the variable of growth, there were notable and easily measurable differences in "structural strain"--for example Oakton's growth of 290% in A.D.A. from 1959 to 1969 as compared with Alton's growth of 17% for the same period--which seemed to have no bearing on the level of conflict. This result, of course, may be due to the utilization of only a few (and possibly not the right ones) of the many possible indicators of the numerous variables falling into the three structural categories. Gamson, who used only a few and very similar indicators in his own research, also had very limited success in differentiating high and low conflict communities according to this scheme. Nevertheless, to the extent that the indicators chosen are representative of their structural categories, the fact that they do not individually or in combination reliably "predict" the level of conflict experienced suggests that we need to look elsewhere for much of the explanation we seek.

Table 2

CUMULATIVE VOTING DATA FOR THE EIGHT DISTRICTS RANKED ACCORDING TO OVERALL CONFLICT[a]

District	Type	Total Eligible Voters[b]	% Election Participation	% Election Dissent	% Referendum Participation	% Referendum Dissent	Number of Ref. Held[c] 1964-1969	Number of Ref. Lost[c] 1964-1969
1. Alton	III	14,800	13.4	37.9	18.3	67.1	2 (2)	2 (2)
2. Weston	III	12,000	20.0	34.6	17.2	49.0	5 (7)	3 (5)
3. Camden	IV	20,000	9.2	19.5	33.8	51.4	7 (11)	4 1/2 (8)
4. Greenwood	IV	5,500	5.8	23.0[d]	33.6	44.0	5 (8)	1 1/3 (2)
5. Trenton	II	8,000	14.1	28.7	9.4	43.4	2 (3)	1 (1)
6. Smithville	II	14,000	9.7	15.7	15.7	34.9	1 (1)	0
7. Oakton	I	15,500	7.8	23.1	25.0	33.5	2 (5)	0
8. Northview	I	6,400	3.4	2.8	14.8	19.0	3 (5)	0

[a] The ranking is from highest to lowest in overall conflict. The data are proportions of participation by eligible voters in school board elections and in tax rate and bond referenda for the five year period, 1964-1969, and proportions of total votes which were cast for losers in board elections and against tax rate increases or bond issues during the same time period.

[b] Derived from 1960 U. S. Census data

[c] The total number of propositions placed before the voters in the various referenda and the total number defeated are given in the numbers within the parentheses.

[d] This figure is inflated and deceptive because, although the 1969 election in Greenwood was hotly contested, four of the five previous elections were uncontested and the fifth was practically uncontested (i.e., one write-in candidate received twenty votes).

Note: All the districts except Weston and Trenton employed nominating caucuses.

Table 3

RANKINGS OF DISTRICTS ON OVERALL CONFLICT, GROWTH, SOLIDARY GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DENSITY AND SCOPE OF MEMBERSHIP

District	Type	Overall Conflict	Growth in A.D.A. & Assessed Valuation (Strain)	Number and Degree of Solidarity of Solidary Groups (Conduciveness)	Organizational Density and Scope of Membership (Integration)
Alton	III	1 High	7 Low	2 High	5 Low
Weston	III	2 High	2 High	6 Low	6 Low
Camden	IV	3 High	5 Med.	4 Med.	3 High
Greenwood	IV	4 Med.	6 Med.	7 Low	2 High
Trenton	II	5 Med.	4 Med.	1 High	8 Low
Smithville	II	6 Low	3 High	3 High	7 Low
Oakton	I	7 Low	1 High	5 Low	4 Med.
Northview	I	8 Low	8 Low	8 Low	1 High

Political Culture and Conflict

In the comparative analysis of the case study data assembled, two variables, leadership by the school authorities and political culture, appeared to account for most of the variation in conflict levels. Taking the latter variable first, among both the districts selected as "deviant" and as "non-deviant" cases, striking and systematic differences in political behavior were clearly apparent and seemed to flow from differing political cultures in, on the one hand, the higher status, predominantly white collar districts and, on the other hand, the lower status, predominantly blue collar districts. The existence of distinctive political cultures was indicated both by extensive data linking the differences in political behavior to attitudes and values concerning the conduct of politics, and by the nature of the systematic patterns of behavior, which conformed to a remarkable extent with behavior associated by Banfield and Wilson with what they describe as the public and private-regarding political cultures. These two political cultures (discussed earlier in this paper) tend to produce different types of citizen participation which are likely to affect the incidence and intensity of conflict.[36] Indeed, this seemed to be decidedly the case in the blue collar and white collar districts studied. Thus, in relation to theories of participation and conflict, a rather surprising finding of the study was that, in terms of conflict, the type of citizen participation was more important than the volume of participation.

While Minar, in his explanation of the differing levels of conflict in white collar and blue collar districts, has emphasized the importance in their respective political cultures of the distinctive norms and values associated with their differential possession of resources of "conflict management skills" (i.e., "perspectives and experiences that prize specialization, division of labor, delegation of authority, and technical

expertise,"[37] thus affecting the way they conduct public business), the findings of the present study indicate that a satisfactory explanation of the incidence of conflict must also take explicit account of their norms and values concerning the nature of politics itself--in other words, the norms and values at the heart of their respective political cultures. While on the basis of the data we certainly agree with Minar about the importance of conflict management resources, we believe that they represent only half, and probably not the most fundamental half, of an adequate explanation of the differences in the incidence and intensity of conflict in blue collar and white collar suburban school districts. In other words, if, as Minar recognizes, "the application of these [conflict management] skills reflects (a) their availability in the community context, and (b) community expectations as to the means and ends of doing public business,"[38] then the nature of these community expectations becomes a vital part of a complete explanation of the variance observed in political behavior. This point becomes more apparent when one recognizes that the organizational and management skills of citizens can be, and not infrequently are, utilized to mobilize political opposition and aggravate conflict rather than to minimize conflict and maximize support for the authorities.[39]

To summarize our position, we agree, on the basis of the data, that the availability of management resources[40] clearly has a great deal to do with the structuring of the political process of school district governance.[41] The crucial "rules of the game" affecting the process, however, appear to derive more from the cultural ethos than from perspectives associated with the level of management resources available. According to Banfield and Wilson's description of their "ethos theory," the "rules of the game" which differentiate the public and private-regarding political cultures vary along four major dimensions: (1) the extent to which competition and "politics"

are viewed as legitimate, (2) the extent to which the public interest is defined in terms of the whole community, (3) the extent to which honesty, impartiality, and disinterested participation are expected, and (4) the extent to which efficiency and expertise in governance are valued.[42] In order to support the position we have taken, we will now present a summary of the data pertaining to the above dimensions. Following this, we will turn to an analysis of the "deviant" cases, which will help clarify the effects of aggregate management resources, norms and values concerning "politics," and the quality of leadership provided by the school authorities.

The Legitimacy of Competition and "Politics"

The data indicate that, although the populaces of both the white collar and blue collar school districts accepted and professed the view that politics should be "kept out" of education, there was a significant difference in terms of the general attitude toward, and meaning ascribed to, "politics," as well as in what went on in practice. While in the white collar districts politics in its broadest sense was shunned as unseemly, and tended to be viewed as unnecessary and improper because it was believed that a common interest could and should be defined, in the blue collar districts competing interests and points of view tended to be an accepted fact of life. In the latter districts, keeping politics out of education chiefly meant that political parties should not interfere in school affairs and that the administration and governance of education should be free of patronage and corruption, matters also proscribed, but apparently taken for granted, in the white collar districts where such occurrences were virtually unheard of. The emphasis on these points in the blue collar districts, however, was more than theoretical. In at least one of the districts, payoffs and patronage were not entirely things of the past. In the others,

"machine" style political behavior and periodic revelations of corruption in municipal or township government were a constant reminder of the dangers of the coarser side of politics. Unlike the white collar districts, in all of the blue collar districts political parties (often nominally "non-partisan") were judged to be the most important local organizations and appeared to reach a larger proportion of the inhabitants than any other organizations. Although overt activity in education on the part of local political parties and politicians was rare in both white collar and blue collar districts, informal and indirect linkages between the school systems and the local political parties tended to be much more important in the blue collar districts, mainly in terms of the recruitment of school board members.[43]

The pre-eminance of the political parties in the blue collar districts seemed accountable to the traditions and values of their citizens, large numbers of whom are foreign born or first generation Americans. In part, the parties appeared to be supported in order to protect and enhance the interests of groups and community areas within the districts. In part, the popularity of the parties seemed to flow from an approach to politics as a form of "play," as an enjoyable diversion and sport.[44] Interview data suggesting this attitude included descriptions of the boisterous character of citizen participation in political parties and political clubs and of the interest and fascination commanded by community controversies. For example, during a teachers strike in Weston, citizens turned out in droves to attend the heated negotiations between the teachers uion and the school board which were open to the public and were described as being "more entertaining than television." Another manifestation of this attitude toward politics may be found in the response of a blue collar school board member, who, when asked why he served on the board, said, "I looked

on it initially as a form of recreation, a hobby, and I still see it this way to some extent. It's interesting and less expensive than bowling." The data indicate that, as a result of this attitude toward politics, hotly contested school board elections in blue collar districts were rather widely enjoyed rather than being viewed as a sort of social disaster, as such elections tended to be perceived when, on occasion, they occurred in white collar districts.

The norms against political competition and conflict in white collar districts can be illustrated by several examples. In Northview, the formation and activities of a self-appointed citizens group critical of the school system (the first such group in the history of the district) were greeted with an icy response from the public despite the fact that it was admitted in private that the group had identified many legitimate problems. It was felt that this "just wasn't the way to go about things," that is, to seek change, especially since the incumbent superintendent was near retirement. The group soon began to disintegrate as its members began to respond to the cues they were receiving. Eventually, several members of the group worked their way up to leadership positions within the school district "establishment." For another example, in Camden tension between the school board and administration and a self-appointed citizens group, which questioned the way reading was being taught, was increased by the feeling which the school authorities conveyed to the citizens group that the group and its purposes were not viewed as a legitimate. Finally, in Greenwood, when a controversy led to a situation in which two independent candidates decided to run for the school board in competition with the slate of candidates endorsed by the district nominating caucus, the independent candidates--who were not aligned--felt called upon to publicly apologize for and justify their decision to challenge the caucus, since

their action was virtually unprecedented. By contrast, in Alton, a blue collar district employing a caucus, independent candidates regularly ran against the caucus slate and no need was seen for any apology for this.

The functioning as well as the existence of nominating caucuses to select school board candidates--which in the Chicago suburbs appears much more likely to occur in white collar than in blue collar districts[45]--seems accountable to cultural values vis-a-vis politics as well as to the level of management resources available. Indeed, caucuses of this type appear to be inventions of the reform movement and are often associated with non-partisan systems.[46] The avowed purposes of caucuses appear to be very public-regarding ones. Caucuses are said to exist as mechanisms for seeking the best qualified persons available for school board service and they operate on the assumption that "the job should seek the man" rather than vice versa. While it could be easily argued that it would be more democratic for the caucuses to offer the voters a choice between several well qualified candidates, in practice the caucuses in white collar Chicago suburban districts overwhelmingly choose to present the voters with single slates of candidates which typically run unopposed,[47] a procedure and response which may be more accountable to a desire to avoid political competition and conflict than to the inexorable workings of the plentiful management resources of white collar districts. As one of the white collar school board member respondents put it, "the whole point of the caucus is to avoid having to run for office," an undertaking which he went on to indicate was viewed as onerous, immodest, and potentially embarassing. In contrast to the white collar districts, the few blue collar districts which employ caucuses are more likely to face opposition from independent candidates, a fact which may be as much a result of cultural values as of a deficiency of managerial resources, as Minar has suggested.[48] In terms

of our original theoretical concerns, the fact that the caucus nominees in white collar districts are typically unopposed minimizes electoral participation as well as electoral conflict. This in turn helps to explain the deviation of Minar's findings from the two theories discussed at the outset of this paper.

Honesty, Impartiality, and Disinterested Participation

While the moderately to high affluent citizens of the white collar districts studied for the most part had little to nothing to gain in the way of material personal benefits from their school systems, and, further, professed or accepted an ideology which prohibited such self-seeking, the same was not true of many of the citizens of the blue collar districts studied. Interview data from blue collar district board members and superintendents indicated that board members tended both to expect and to receive requests for favors from their constituents, and that some members tried to grant these requests toward the end of building their political following. In particular, school board members frequently mentioned receiving personal requests from citizens for custodial or other noncertified positions for themselves or their friends or relatives. Further, board members in three out of four of the blue collar districts alluded to the days in the not too distant past when noncertified positions in their systems were objects of patronage. Indeed, in one of these districts one of the largest controversies in fact involved allegations against the school board concerning the use of custodians jobs as "political plums," reputed "ghosts" on the district's payroll, and suspicion of bribery in the case of the retention of an attorney. The majority on this particular board, which became completely discredited, was also accused of holding secret "bootleg" board meetings at which they plotted their machinations.

Interestingly, in regard to "explaining" observed political behavior, a subsequent "reform" member of this board remarked that he felt that the competitiveness of board elections and the greater turnout of voters for board elections than for referenda in his district was at least partly accountable to the tradition of patronage associated with the board.

The history of patronage and occasional revelations of corruption in local government, and in a few cases in the school systems themselves, tended to make the residents of blue collar districts suspicious of public officials, including both school administrators and school board members. Three out of four of the blue collar districts studied had had scandals in local government within the past decade. One of the districts, already alluded to, had also unquestionably had cases of improper behavior involving school authorities. On the other hand, none of the white collar districts in the study had such histories to undermine trust in public officials. Thus, the reluctance to delegate authority and defer to expertise common in the blue collar districts derived not only from the paucity of managerial experiences and attitudes in the populace but also from aspects of the political culture which generated suspicion of public officials.

Although the non-certified positions appeared to be the chief "plums" which were sought by citizens in blue collar districts, teaching positions for members of the family, contracts for local businessmen, and assorted lesser benefits were also frequently pursued on a "personal favor" basis, and when such favors were not granted the tension which ensued often led to conflict. For example, in Alton a disgruntled businessman who had lost a school contract teamed up with the irate family of a young teacher--who had not been rehired by the district--to form a citizens "watchdog" group whose real objective, stated publicly by the

leaders on several occasions, was to "get" the superintendent. This group opposed the school board and superintendent at every opportunity, at board meetings and in elections, and maintained its activities for more than five years.

The Broad Public Interest

In general, in the blue collar districts, rather than a primary commitment to what was "best" for the whole school system, there tended to be a more fundamental allegiance to sub-communities and groups within the school districts. This tendency was often aggravated by the fact that three out of four of the districts subsumed several villages or communities within their boundaries. Although the same was true of two of the four white collar districts, these districts seldom allowed these potential lines of cleavage to interfere with the pursuit of the "best interest" of the whole school district. These points are illustrated by the fact that while in the white collar districts the PTAs tended to work together well to promote projects, including referenda, which benefited the whole district, there was a notable lack of unity among the PTAs within the blue collar districts. This lack of unity was clearly partly accountable to the pronounced allegiance, apparent in both actions and words, of blue collar PTAs to their own schools and sub-communities. At the same time, insufficient managerial and leadership skills and the general weakness of the PTAs themselves in the blue collar districts, were also factors which contributed to the lack of unity.

Other evidence suggesting allegiance to sub-communities and groups in the blue collar districts included aspects of voting behavior and the performance of school board members. The citizens of the blue collar districts manifested certain of their "attachments" in the phenomenon of

"name-voting," a practice not detected in the white collar districts. In all four of the blue collar districts, respondents volunteered that having a name associated with certain ethnic groups would attract votes in board elections. As one board member put it, "Being Bohemian will draw votes; being Bohemian and Catholic is even better." In the case of the performance of board members, although the board members in all the districts studied are elected at-large, those in the blue collar districts appeared more inclined than their counterparts in the white collar districts to represent and serve the interests of sub-communities or areas within their districts.

Finally, the difference between the blue collar and white collar districts in terms of their ideology regarding the definition of the public interest can be depicted in the manner in which competing demands were presented. When, on occasion, the consensus regarding what was "best" for the whole district broke down in the white collar districts (and, of course, this happened most frequently in the "deviant" white collar districts), there was a tendency for competing views to be couched in the rhetoric of "the broad public interest" even when in substance they clearly reflected the desires of sub-communities or special interest groups. On the other hand, in the blue collar districts, demands generally were simply presented from a neighborhood or sub-community point of view with little or no attempt to justify them in terms of what was "best" for the whole district.

The "Deviant" Cases

In their comparative analyses of the four school districts they studied, Minar and Snow found that the quality of leadership by school authorities seemed to account for much of the variance in conflict levels not readily attributable to contextual factors, such as the availability

of management resources.[49] The same was true in the present study. As compared with the high status-low conflict districts (Northview and Oakton), many of the difficulties of the high status-high conflict districts (Greenwood and Camden) seemed to stem from naive, unrealistic, or unresourceful leadership behavior by their authorities.[50] On the other hand, as compared with the low status-high conflict districts (Alton and Weston), astute and enterprising leadership by the authorities in the low status-low conflict districts (Trenton and Smithville) appeared to partially offset their many contextual disadvantages and contribute to their relatively low conflict levels. Finally, although there were numerous and frequently important differences among the eight districts, the four districts lowest on overall conflict appeared generally to have more resourceful leadership from their authorities than did the four districts highest on overall conflict, three of which witnessed provocative behavior by their authorities which intensified or precipitated conflict.

It would, of course, be simplistic and far-fetched to suggest that more effective leadership by the authorities by itself could have brought the high conflict districts down to the conflict levels of the low conflict districts when many other variables than the quality of leadership obviously were involved. However, it does appear that in many instances conflict might have been appreciably reduced by more resourceful leadership. In particular, in the comparative analysis two dimensions of leadership seemed to be especially important: politically sensitive behavior (as opposed to apolitical behavior) and proactive behavior to retain the initiative (as opposed to reactive behavior in which the authorities tend to be on the defensive). Thus, as we turn now to a discussion of the data supporting these conclusions, we will attempt to illustrate the points we have made by means of a number of examples.

To begin with the high status-high conflict cases, Greenwood provides a striking illustration of the effects of unrealistic and apolitical leadership behavior. Although Greenwood is remarkably similar to Northview (the district lowest on overall conflict) in terms of the composition of its population, its size, and its advantageous resources and structural features, the Greenwood school board precipitated a crisis by ignoring the recommendation of a citizens advisory committee it had appointed to consider the question of whether the district should enlarge its existing junior high in the eastern area of the district or build a new middle school in the western and less populated area of the district. Despite the contrary recommendation of the committee, the board chose to seek passage of a bond issue to build the new school, which would have required extensive bussing of students from the eastern area of the district. Four members of the citizens committee opposed the board's decision and formed an ad hoc group of about forty citizens which very skillfully fought the bond referendum, which was defeated.

The populace of the small and rather homogeneous all-white district became intensely involved in this issue (through numerous meetings) and very nearly polarized by it, as the district's abundant management resources were used very effectively to mobilize conflict. Board members interviewed stated, in retrospect, that they had realized that their decision might not be popular in some quarters, but that they had counted on majority support for their bond referendum because they were convinced that it was in the "best" interest of the district from an educational standpoint. However, it was quite clear at the time of the issue that a number of community values in addition to educational ones were being weighed by the populace.

In the aftermath of the referendum defeat, with both the consensus concerning what was "best" for the district and the local norms against conflict temporarily shattered, the school board groped for a solution to the junior high issue. They next proposed a bond referendum to authorize an addition to the existing junior high, but this proposal became embroiled in a new dispute over which property adjacent to the existing school should be utilized. Again, the board had chosen to disregard the advice and requests of citizens involved--this time on a self-appointed basis--in favor of doing what it thought was best educationally, and again many of these citizens joined together to organize an effective ad hoc opposition group. Following the defeat of the second referendum, the board capitulated and delegated the resolution of the issue to a new citizens advisory committee made up of opponents and proponents of the previous referenda. The "compromise" referendum proposal which emerged, and which was successfully passed, simply revised the second proposal to satisfy citizens' demands regarding the property to be utilized.[51]

Throughout this controversy, the school board and PTAs managed to publicly maintain their "unity" norms, although numerous PTA members obviously voted against the first two referenda and not a few participated in the ad hoc groups, which, in addition to the two already mentioned, included another one which supported the second referendum and opposed the third one. Before "peace" was restored and the district reverted back to the consensual public-regarding style of decision-making which had formerly flourished, the unity norms of the board and PTAs temporarily collapsed, when, in the final paroxysm of the conflict, the controversy spilled over into the board election immediately following the third referendum.

The intense controversy which Greenwood experienced was certainly not brought about by any deficiency in management resources--either in the

populace or upon the school board, which was loaded with executives--or by a lack of general commitment to public-regarding values. Nor did the controversy seem to spring from ideological differences within the community, which was heavily Jewish and liberal. However, it did appear that the unrealistic and apolitical behavior of the school board--derived ironically from an excess of public-regarding zeal for what it thought could be demonstrated to be "best" for the district--triggered the conflict by destroying (temporarily) the credibility of the assumption of a single public interest upon which the public-regarding culture rests. Finally, it should be noted that the superintendent, a key participant who might have tried to steer the board toward more realistic decisions, observed when interviewed that he could not understand the unwillingness of citizens to do what was "best" educationally. He elaborated on this theme by stating, in effect, that he took what amounted to an altruistic view of citizens' responsibilities and of politics in general because he had been raised in the La Follette "progressive" tradition.

The case of Camden presents a more complex problem than that of Greenwood. While apolitical leadership by the authorities again seemed to foster conflict, it is clear that the authorities in Camden faced a much more difficult situation than those in Greenwood. Camden is an older and much larger community than Greenwood and it has a quite conservative, strongly Republican political tradition. Its all-white population is about equally divided among Catholics and Protestants and contains a sizeable number of senior citizens. The conservatism of the community is echoed and amplified by the two local newspapers, which tend to take a critical posture regarding the economy and efficiency of the operation of the school district. In addition to a rather generalized tax consciousness in the

community, the district has to contend with the special problem of the sentiments and desires of its numerous parochial school parents.

Much of the conflict that Camden experienced seemed to derive from a fundamental ideological clash between conservative and liberal governmental and educational philosophies. During the period studied, and for some time before, the school board and school caucus essentially represented the views of the more liberal segment of Camden's population, which consistently, although not always actively, supported the rather liberal, long incumbent superintendent. Moreover, throughout most of the period studied the school board was made up entirely of Protestants, a state of affairs which seemed politically unwise in light of the district's large Catholic population and the desires and dissatisfactions made known to the school board periodically by a small group of informally organized parochial school parents.

The major controversy which dramatized the clash of educational and governmental philosophies had its origin just prior to the study period when a small group of fairly influential citizens formed a committee to promote the use of the "phonics" reading method in place of the "look-say" method being employed. More broadly, the committee favored a return to "basic education," more emphasis upon traditional American values, and the elimination of "progressive education" and "liberal indoctrination" in the schools. As mentioned earlier, the school authorities soon aggravated this situation by clearly conveying to the committee the feeling that its purposes were not viewed as legitimate. After the committee was rebuffed, it felt that there was little prospect of success in working within the system. Consequently, the committee began to resort to "underground" tactics, such as "anonymous" mailings to district residents calling for the defeat of

tax and bond referenda. The committee also backed an independent candidate who won in the 1965 board election and one who lost in the 1966 election.

Although the activity and impact of the committee decreased after 1965, the public relations problems of the authorities continued and were aggrevated, and sometimes even caused, by their lack of initiative and by the defensive, reactive posture they tended to assume. For example, they were tardy in instituting a newsletter to citizens (not begun until 1966) and the strategy they adopted--as a result of the pressures they felt--of attempting to act more covertly, principally through use of committee meetings of board members as vehicles for private policy-making discussions, led to complaints in 1967 from local newspaper reporters and concerns about the board's public image. Another example of the authorities' weakness in public relations was their handling of the sensitive matter of school attendance boundary changes and concomitant bussing of students. These actions, taken almost every year to equalize class size, were usually accompanied by charges that families affected had not been given sufficient notice or an opportunity to attend hearings preliminary to decisions on these matters. By contrast, in Oakton, the district highest in growth, the authorities handled the same problem more skillfully and successfully by holding well-publicized public hearings well in advance of decision-making.

In summary, conflict in Camden seemed to stem principally from ideological differences within the populace which made a public-regarding consensus regarding the school system difficult to achieve or maintain, despite widespread lip service to this value. Additionally, inept leadership by the authorities increased tension and contributed to the

mobilization of management resources against the establishment. Finally, and this is highly speculative, it could be that the high proportion of Catholics (who as a group, according to Banfield and Wilson, are seldom strong advocates of public-regardingness[52]) in middle class Camden's population, together with the absence of Jews, who were conspicuous both in numbers and in their active support and leadership in the other high status districts studied, may account in part for the difficulties in achieving a stable public-regarding consensus.

Moving now to the low status-low conflict districts, in addition to astute leadership Smithville and Trenton also had in common a distribution of the electorate within their boundaries which enabled the largest sub-community within each district to control district decision-making. Both of these sub-communities consistently utilized the voting advantage they enjoyed to dominate district affairs toward the end of protecting their own interests, not the least of which was to try to maintain the separation existing between themselves and all-black sub-communities within the districts. In Smithville, all the board members came from one of three sub-communities, and in Trenton all but one of the board members came from one of four sub-communities. Indeed, in both districts the situation bordered upon what Bachrach and Baratz call a "nondecision-making" situation, one in which the "other face of power" is such that certain latent issues are effectively suppressed.[53] As a result of this state of affairs, there was a kind of stability and support for the authorities (especially in Smithville) which was not found in the other blue collar districts, and which tended to hold down the level of conflict.

Unlike the composition of the other blue collar districts' school boards (including Trenton's), Smithville's board included several higher

status persons who provided unusual leadership strength as well as strong and effective support for the district's able superintendent. The board was also unique in the long tenure of many of its members, including the board president, a highly respected local physician. In the period of over ten years that the superintendent and the key members of the board worked together they professed that they had made it a point to try to anticipate problems and retain the initiative. In this regard, they appeared to have been quite successful. For example, they initiated a contract with the local teachers union before it asked for one, placed a black principal in an all-black (de facto segregated) school before demands materialized for this, and built perhaps the finest school in the district outside the main sub-community which dominated the district.

The political sensitivity of the district's astute superintendent may be illustrated by his attitude toward citizens advisory committees, which he felt were "not an unmixed blessing." As he noted when interviewed, "if you appoint a citizens advisory committee, you had better be prepared to take its advice." Although this would only seem to be common sense, as we have seen, this is precisely where the authorities in Greenwood went astray.

Smithville's relatively low level of overall conflict seemed to be accountable to the unusual leadership strength and unity of its authorities and the support they received from their main sub-community. In turn, the quality of personnel serving on the school board was linked to the fact that Smithville, unlike the other blue collar districts, has managed to retain as residents a sizeable number of the businessmen and professionals who work in the community. Finally, conflict management in Smithville appeared to be somewhat facilitated by the fact that private-regarding behavior was less evident there than in the other blue collar districts.

In several important respects the situation in Trenton resembled that described by Vidich and Bensman in their celebrated study of "Springdale."[54] Like Mr. Peabody in Springdale, Trenton's superintendent operated under heavy constraints imposed by an uncooperative school board dominated by a very conservative sub-community. Like Mr. Peabody, the superintendent nevertheless exerted what appeared to be the maximum possible influence, under the circumstances, by means of full and strategic use of his limited resources. For example, to contend with the lack of deference from his all-blue collar board, their propensity to meddle in routine administrative matters, and their inclination to caucus informally prior to meetings in order to decide how they would vote on certain matters, the superintendent intentionally made the agendas he sent out in advance of board meetings as sketchy as possible and then allowed the board to bog down whenever they liked in "administrivia." This approach tended to leave open to the superintendent the opportunity to move ahead somewhat independently, in a quiet and cautious fashion, in more substantive areas, such as curriculum development. Again, like Mr. Peabody, the superintendent knew his community and made good use of the PTAs as support organizations, for example, in getting out the vote for referenda the board had approved but had done little campaigning for.

However, although the superintendent's skill contributed to the reduction of conflict, it was primarily the strong dominance of the main sub-community and its interests that appeared to account for the moderate level of overall conflict in a setting which otherwise might have produced intense conflict. An occurrance which illustrates this point was the sudden and arbitrary termination by the board of a citizens study group it had appointed to look into the problem of a <u>de facto</u> segregated school in the

district. In the face of this provocative action, taken as result of fear that the study group might actually do something about the problem, the black community essentially felt powerless to pursue the matter on the local level.[55]

To conclude, if it is safe to assume, as suggested by Minar's study of forty-eight districts,[56] that high status districts tend to be low on conflict and low status districts tend to high on conflict, the present study suggests that, at least in the Chicago suburban area, this is due both to differences in cultural ethos and to the level of management resources.[57] It appears that in "normal" cases, higher status districts will tend to have public-regarding cultures (which tend to lead to harmony and the avoidance of conflict) as well as plentiful management resources while lower status districts will tend to have private-regarding cultures (which tend to lead to tension and conflict) as well as meager management resources. In "deviant" cases, the public-regarding tendency toward consensus of high status-high conflict districts will have broken down, most likely because of ideological tensions and/or as a result of inept leadership, and management resources will be used to mobilize conflict. Low status-low conflict districts may exist as a result of unusually skilled leadership behavior by the authorities and/or as a consequence of a distribution of power within the districts which tends to suppress conflict.

In terms of the apparently complex relationship of the level of citizen participation to the incidence and intensity of conflict, the most that it seems possible to say on the basis of the data in this study is that, as noted earlier, the <u>type</u> of citizen participation (i.e., public or private-regarding) in the "non-deviant" cases appeared to be more important than the <u>volume</u> of participation. In the "deviant" cases, factors

other than cultural ethos, level of participation, or management resources seemed to be the principal determinants of the level of conflict. For example, both Northview and Greenwood were public-regarding and had abundant management resources and high and stable citizen participation. But, they differed radically in their overall conflict for reasons we have discussed.

Although it will come as no surprise that the four districts highest on overall conflict faced significantly more organized opposition than did the four districts lowest on overall conflict, it is noteworthy that in two of the four high conflict districts (Alton and Greenwood) the formation of organized opposition was precipitated by apolitical and provocative behavior by the authorities. In light of the impact that even quite small opposition groups can exert in school districts--given the structural and political vulnerability of nonpartisan school government--it would seem that school authorities would benefit by more attention and sensitivity to the political realities of the world in which they operate.

IMPLICATIONS

Of course, conflict is not always dysfunctional,[58] and for this reason "good" administration cannot simply be equated with the avoidance of conflict. Indeed, in some instances progress may require that conflict be joined. Nevertheless, where high conflict seems unnecessary or counterproductive, careful consideration of the political as well as the more substantive (e.g., educational) merits of alternative policies seems in order. Here, however, the phoenix-like myth of the "nonpolitical" nature of educational policy-making often seems to delude both school board members and superintendents. Hence, an obvious implication of our findings

is that school authorities might find training designed to raise their "political consciousness" very useful. In addition, training which focuses upon conflict management skills should emphasize the analysis and anticipation of problems and issues and proactive leadership behavior.

Moreover, to the extent that predominantly blue collar school districts indeed tend to have private-regarding political cultures--and further research on this point is much needed, especially in areas which, unlike the Chicago region, are not known for their private-regarding, machine politics traditions--it appears that the training and expectations of school administrators who may serve in such districts should be adjusted accordingly. Our data suggest that school superintendents in blue collar districts--where, because of the cultural ethos and available management resources, there is less deference than in white collar districts to expertise--are often forced to play the role of pragmatic political strategists while their counterparts in white collar districts are more often able to play the role of educational statesmen more consistent with the ideology of their profession and training. While both roles are political ones--that of the statesman simply requiring a different and more subtle brand of politics--school superintendents in blue collar districts should be less burdened with the constraining baggage of a professional ideology which is ill-suited to their situation and which in some cases, as our data revealed, tends to incapacitate them with role conflict.

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[13]Ibid., p. 154.

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[16]Robert L. Crain and Donald B. Rosenthal, "Community Status as a Dimension of Local Decision-Making." American Sociological Review, 32:6, December 1967, 970-984.

[17]Ibid., p. 970.

[18]William A. Gamson, "Rancorous Conflict in Community Politics," American Sociological Review, 31:1, February 1966, 71-81

[19]Joseph R. Gusfield, "Mass Society and Extremist Politics," American Sociological Review, 27, February 1962, 19-30.

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[21]Ibid.

[22]David W. Minar, Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities. Cooperative Research Project No. 2440 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1966).

[23]Minar, "The Community Basis. . .," p. 833.

[24]Pseudonyms for the names of the school districts are used to protect the identity of participants.

[25]Essentially, the design of the study is similar to the approach advocated by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. for community research problems of this type. See his article, "The Sociological Study of Communities," Rural Sociology, Vol. 24, June 1959, p. 126.

[26]Median family income data for Cook County suburban elementary school districts were extracted from U.S. Census, Census Tracts: Chicago, Illinois, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. 1960, Final Report PHC 1-(26), Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962. Data on success and failure in referenda were obtained from the Cook County Superintendent of Schools Office.

[27]The Trenton School District, selected as a low conflict district on the basis of erroneous data obtained from the Cook County Superintendent of Schools Office, proved, after the study was underway, to have defeated one referendum and passed one referendum since 1963. Nevertheless, the district proved to be an interesting example of a low status-low conflict district, as it was intended to be by initial slection.

[28]Of the eight districts originally selected, all but one, a high status-high conflict district, agreed to participate in the study. The next high status-high conflict district approached (to replace the one above) readily agreed to participate.

[29]See David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965).

[30]Gamson, op. cit.

[31]The hypothesis that strain produced by change within the community tends to lead to conflict has been supported by the findings of the so-called "Claremont Studies" carried out under the direction of Laurence Iannaccone. See Laurence Iannaccone, Politics in Education (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1967), pp. 82-98.

[32]In addition to the presence of solidary groups, other variables (including governmental and physical fragmentation of the community, and social and economic heterogeneity) which might provide bases for cleavages were investigated. Rankings of the districts on these variables proved to be highly correlated with the ranking on number and degree of solidarity of solidary groups.

[33]Gamson, op. cit., p. 71.

[34]See Robert L. Crain, The Politics of School Desegregation (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969), pp. 149ff.

[35]Minar, "The Community Basis. . .," p. 825.

[36]It should be noted that the validity of Banfield and Wilson's "political ethos theory" is questioned by some political scientists. For a critique of the theory, see Raymond E. Wolfinger and John O. Field, "Political Ethos and the Structure of City Government," American Political Science Review, 60 (June 1966), 306-26. For a rebuttal of Wolfinger and Field's argument, see Robert L. Lineberry and Edmund P. Fowler, "Reformism and Public Policies in American Cities," American Political Science Review, 61 (September 1967), 701-716. For an example of research concerning the validity of the "ethos theory" in educational politics, see Peter J. Cistone and Bernard Hennessy, "School Board Members' Attitudes and Administrative Forms: An Exploration of Public-Regardingness," Midwest Journal of Political Science, XV, 3 (August 1971), 587-594. For an analysis of school politics which draws upon the "ethos theory" in discussing the tension between the "machine" and "reform" traditions, see Paul E. Peterson and T.R. Williams, Educational Politics: Chicago Style (forthcoming). Finally, for examples of descriptions of school politics in what appear to be very "private-regarding" settings, see Peter Schrag, "Fifteen Beacon Street," in Governing Education, edited by Alan Rosenthal (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969), pp. 368-394; and Joseph M. Cronin and David Rafky, "The Political Life of City School Custodians: Blue Collar Power," a paper presented at the annual A.E.R.A. Meeting, Minneapolis, Minn., March 1970.

[37]Minar, Educational Decision-Making. . . ., p. 8.

[38]Ibid., p. 133.

[39]Indeed, a recent study of school-community conflict by Weeres analyzes the factors involved in some situations where the organizational skills of higher status populaces were used to mobilize conflict. See Joseph B. Weeres, "School-Community Conflict in a Large Urban School System," Administrator's Notebook, XIX (May 1970), No. 9.

[40]Since in our view the skills and attitudes Minar associates with what he calls "conflict management resources" can be used either to mobilize or suppress controversy, we prefer to refer to these resources as simply "management resources."

[41]For discussions of the effects of management resources upon the structuring of the political process of school district governance, see William L. Boyd and David W. O'Shea, "Community Status, Political Culture, and the Character of Suburban School Politics," A Paper Presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, April 4, 1972; and David O'Shea, "The Structuring of Political Processes in Suburban School District Government," A Paper Presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Ill., April 5, 1972.

[42]Since the extent to which efficiency and expertise are prized is, of course, a matter which appears to be heavily influenced by the level of management resources as well as by the cultural ethos, rather than treating this dimension separately we will deal with it now and again, when relevant, in the course of the remainder of this paper.

[43]For more on this point, see Boyd and O'Shea, op. cit.

[44]On "politics as play," see Banfield and Wilson, op. cit., p. 22.

[45]See Minar, "The Community Basis . . . ," pp. 829-831.

[46]See Banfield, and Wilson, op. cit., p. 143.

[47]Minar, "The Community Basis . . . ," pp. 829-831.

[48]Ibid.

[49]See Minar, Educational Decision-Making . . . ; and the companion study by R.J. Snow ("Local Experts: Their Roles as Conflict Managers in Municipal and Educational Government" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, Northwestern University, 1966), and his "Community Resources and Conflict Propensity as Sources for Constraints on the Local School Administrator," a paper presented at the A.E.R.A. Annual Meeting, February 18, 1967, New York City. ERIC document ED 012 507.

[50]We do not pretend to have employed scientific measures of the notoriously vague "leadership" concept. Instead, the conclusions we present here are based upon gross differences in leadership behavior which became apparent in the comparative analysis of the districts.

[51]Regarding the possibility that a "power elite" might have orchestrated this controversy to protect its interests, all respondents agreed that power in the community was essentially amorphous and that community influentials were about equally divided on the first two referenda.

[52]See Banfield and Wilson, op. cit., pp. 40-43.

[53]See Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," American Political Science Review, December 1962, 947-962.

[54]Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958).

[55]They did appeal the case of the de facto segregated school to state and federal authorities, but at the end of the study period they were still awaiting some substantive action.

[56]Minar, "The Community Basis . . ."

[57]This conclusion is also supported by data collected in eight blue collar and seven white collar Chicago suburban elementary school districts by David O'Shea in his study entitled, "School Board-Community Relations and Local Resource Utilization" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of Chicago, 1971). See Boyd and O'Shea, op. cit., for a summary of these data.

[58]On this point, see Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1956).